

In response to the Official Action mailed February 23, 2005, please amend the following claim as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method of managing a hold queue at a call center comprising:

receiving an incoming telephone call from at least one caller;
placing the caller in a first position in the hold queue;
informing caller of estimated hold time and options for managing caller's hold position;
and
responsive to a request from a caller, pausing the first position in the hold queue to create a paused hold status wherein caller remains in position in the queue while caller can opt to move away from telephone while on hold without losing caller's position in the queue;
requesting by the caller an amount of time for paused hold period;
determining when the requested paused hold period has ended;
and
placing the call back into the hold queue at paused position.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising returning the caller to an on hold status to create a second position in the hold queue, wherein the second position in the hold queue is shorter than or equal to the first position in the hold queue.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the request comprises changing the caller's position in the hold queue.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the request comprises pausing the caller's position for a period of time.
5. The method of claim 1 further comprising crediting pause time to the caller based on the amount of time the caller has been in the hold queue.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the caller has been on hold for a period of time not less than the period of time requested.
7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising forwarding the call to an attendant when the ~~attendant~~ attendant is available.
8. (currently amended) A method of managing a hold queue at a call center comprising:
receiving an incoming telephone call from at least one caller;
placing the caller in a first position in the hold queue;
informing caller of estimated hold time and options for managing caller's hold position;
and
pausing the first position in the hold queue to create a paused hold status wherein caller remains in position in the queue while caller can opt to move away from telephone while on hold without losing caller's position in the queue;
requesting by the caller an amount of time for paused hold period;
determining when the requested paused hold period has ended;
and
placing the call back into the hold queue at paused position.
9. The method of claim 8 further comprising detecting that the caller is unavailable for connection to an attendant.
10. The method of claim 8 further comprising receiving a request from a caller to pause the first position in the hold queue.
11. The method of claim 10 wherein the request comprises changing the caller's position in the hold queue.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein the request comprises pausing the caller's position for a period of time.

13. (currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving an incoming telephone call from a caller;

placing the call in a hold queue;

informing caller of estimated hold time and options for managing caller's hold position;

monitoring how long the caller has been on hold;

receiving a request from the caller to pause a first position in a hold queue for a period of time;

and

granting the request based on the amount of time the caller has been on hold wherein caller remains in the first position in the queue while caller can opt to move away from telephone while on hold without losing caller's position in the queue;

and

placing the call back into the hold queue at paused position.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising, returning the party to an on hold status to create a second position in the hold queue, wherein the second position in the hold queue is shorter than or equal to the first position in the hold queue.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising, decreasing the amount of time on hold in the second position if the party returns to an on hold status before the expiration of the requested pause time.

16. (currently amended) A system for managing a hold queue at a call center comprising:

a communications device for receiving a call;

means for receiving an incoming telephone call from at least one caller;

means for placing the caller in a first position in the hold queue;

means for informing caller of estimated hold time and options for managing caller's hold position;

means responsive to a request from a caller, for pausing the first position in the hold queue for a period of time to create a paused hold status

wherein caller remains in the first position in the queue while caller can opt to move away from telephone while on hold without losing caller's position in the queue;

means for requesting by the caller an amount of time for paused hold period;

means for determining when the requested paused hold period has ended;
and

means for placing the call back into the hold queue at paused position.

17. (currently amended) A computer program product for managing a hold queue at a call center, the computer program product comprising:

a recorded medium;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for receiving an incoming telephone call from at least one caller;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for placing the caller in a first position in the hold queue;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for informing caller of estimated hold time and options for managing caller's hold position;

and

means, recorded on the recording medium, for pausing the first position in the hold queue for a period of time to create a paused hold status wherein

caller remains in the first position in the queue while caller can opt to move away from telephone while on hold without losing caller's position in the queue;

means, recorded on the recording medium, for requesting by the caller an amount of time for paused hold period;